

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 889

By Trail

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate the Middle Tennessee State University Lady Raiders Basketball Team on their outstanding 2003-2004 season.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause in its deliberations to recognize those outstanding teams of young men and women who display courage, diligence, and excellence in the realm of athletics; and

WHEREAS, one such noteworthy team is the Middle Tennessee State University Women's Basketball Team, the Lady Raiders, who recently completed a very successful 2003-2004 season which saw them win the 2004 Sun Belt Conference Tournament Championship; and

WHEREAS, the Lady Raiders were victorious in their three Sun Belt tournament contests, defeating North Texas 81-66, overcoming Denver 64-61, and vanquishing Western Kentucky University on their home court in Bowling Green 79-57, to claim their first Sun Belt Tournament Championship; and

WHEREAS, the Lady Raiders of MTSU earned this championship through the team's aggressive effort on both ends of the floor and with an incredible display of poise and determination that showcased the young team's newfound character and maturity; and

WHEREAS, a team with great players at every position, Junior Point Guard Patrice Holmes scored 18 points during the Championship game over Western Kentucky University on her way to being named Most Valuable Player in the Tournament for the second straight year, and Sophomore Tia Stovall, Freshman Krystle Horton, and Senior Jennfier Justice were named to the Sun Belt All-Tournament Team; and

WHEREAS, having compiled a record of 23-7 at that point in the season, MTSU claimed the automatic bid to the NCAA Women's National Championship Tournament, which they so rightfully deserved, by winning the Sun Belt Tournament; and

WHEREAS, the fearless Lady Raiders of MTSU entered the NCAA Tournament as a #13 seed and shocked the women's basketball world by defeating #4 seed and 11<sup>th</sup> ranked North Carolina decisively to win the most important game in the 29-year history of Lady Raider basketball; and

WHEREAS, the Sun Belt Tournament Champions, making their first appearance in the "Big Dance" since 1998, were just the third #13 seed to defeat a #4 seed in the history of the Women's NCAA Tournament, thereby bringing much national acclaim and media exposure to this tremendously deserving team; and

WHEREAS, ending their season all too soon with a loss to former NCAA Champion Notre Dame on their home court in South Bend, the Lady Raiders of MTSU completed arguably the most successful season in team history with a record of 24-8, while winning the respect and admiration of women's basketball fans across the nation; and

WHEREAS, the outstanding members of this championship team are: Seniors Keisha McClinic, Yamil Cordero, and Jennifer Justice, Juniors Ciara Gray, Ditte Jakobsen, and Patrice Holmes, Sophomores Tia Stovall and Cartia Bailey, and Freshmen Jenne Webb, Krystle Horton, and Chrissy Givens; and

WHEREAS, the MTSU Women's Basketball Team is guided by an outstanding coaching staff led by Head Coach Stephany Smith, with excellent support from Assistant Coaches Drew Clinton, Chavonne Hammond-Taylor, Kim Rosamond, and Melanie Walls; and

WHEREAS, the Lady Raiders also received the support and assistance of Athletic Trainer Alison Thompson, Strength and Conditioning Coach Darrin Edgington, and Team Managers Tiffany Reeves, Gavin Graves, Dennis Watson, and Kajon Thomas; and

WHEREAS, throughout their regular season, the Sun Belt Tournament and their games in the NCAA Tournament, the Lady Raiders enjoyed the enthusiastic support of the administration, faculty, staff, students, and fans of Middle Tennessee State University; and

WHEREAS, the athletic excellence, courage, and heart displayed by this exceptional basketball team is a tribute to the hard work and dedication of both coaches and players alike and deserves special recognition; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor and congratulate the Middle Tennessee State University Women's Basketball Team on their great 2003-2004 season, their 2004 Sun Belt Conference Tournament Championship, and their outstanding performance in the NCAA Tournament.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we wish all the Lady Raider players, coaches, and staff continued success in all their future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.